



# NEWS RELEASE



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## **INDY'S FREE TAX PREP PROGRAM RECEIVES \$125,800 IRS GRANT**

*Federal funding will support tax preparation assistance for local low-, moderate-income families*

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently awarded a \$125,800 grant to be used in 2012 by “Indy’s Free Tax Prep,” a program operated by Indy’s Campaign for Financial Fitness (ICFF) and the Indianapolis Asset Building Coalition (IABC) as part of the citywide Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. In 2011, more than 5,000 tax returns were prepared for eligible Indianapolis residents at no cost through this effort.

“The IRS VITA grant will boost our local financial fitness initiatives,” said First Lady of Indianapolis Winnie Ballard, chairperson of ICFF. “Providing free tax preparation for thousands of eligible residents is one of the best ways we can help individuals and families in Indianapolis keep more of their hard-earned money and stay on track for long-term financial stability.”

VITA partners and volunteers provide free tax return preparation and electronic filing to low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The program previously received IRS funding for use in 2010 and 2011. In 2012, the program again will feature expanded sites and a special kickoff event in January. For tax year 2011, individuals and families with a gross income of \$49,000 or lower are eligible for assistance.

Mayor Ballard, Winnie Ballard, Financial Health Credit Union CEO Chris Wardrip and Fay Biccard Glick Community Center CEO Helen Woods-Lands issued a call today for volunteers for Indy’s Free Tax Prep at an event at Indianapolis City Market. Attendees learned about the process for volunteers to sign up and access any training needed. Volunteer tax preparers, screeners, reviewers and assistants are needed. Individuals interested in volunteering to assist area community centers with tax prep and other financial fitness services may visit [www.indyscampaign.org](http://www.indyscampaign.org) to register.

“Not only will participating volunteers help with the preparation service, but they have the potential to make a difference in someone’s life by offering them access to tools on how to become financially fit,” said Mayor Ballard.

The VITA grant funding will be utilized to extend services to underserved populations and hardest-to-reach areas, both within and outside of the city’s urban core; increase the capacity to file returns electronically; heighten quality control and improve the accuracy of returns prepared by the VITA sites; and enhance training of volunteers. Locally, the VITA program is a collaboration of public and private entities, including the City of Indianapolis, United Way of Central Indiana, Central Indiana Community Foundation, local banks and credit unions, and nonprofit organizations focused on asset building and financial fitness. The grant application was submitted through the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, a public-private partnership that is also an ICFF partner and a member of the IABC.

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